

## TO REPEAL PART OF CHAPTER 189.

JANUARY 26, 1897.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. HULL, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

### REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 9775.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 9775) to repeal so much of chapter 189 of the Statutes of the United States of America, passed at the third session of the Fifty-third Congress and approved March 2, 1895, as requires that the lower portion of the Rock Island Bridge shall not be occupied by any street railway company without paying a reasonable rent therefor, having considered the same, report the bill back to the House with the recommendation that the bill do pass with the following amendments:

Strike out the word "repeal," in the first line of the title of the bill, and substitute therefor the word "amend."

Strike out the word "repealed," in line 20, and add the following:

amend, by adding after the final words, "paying a reasonable rent therefor," the following words: "unless said company, in lieu of such rent, shall furnish and deliver at the electric motor on the draw of the bridge the necessary and proper electric power for operating the draw, to the satisfaction of the Secretary of War, so long as said company occupies or uses said bridge for railway purposes."

Your committee attach hereto and make part of this report the report of the Chief of Ordnance.

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OFFICE OF CHIEF OF ORDNANCE,  
Washington, January 15, 1897.

Respectfully returned to the Honorable Secretary of War.

The subject of charging the Tri-City Street Railway Company a reasonable rental for the use of the Rock Island Bridge has received much consideration within the last two years, and many arguments on the subject have been presented to this Department, several of which have been communicated to the Secretary of War, especially while he was considering the subject of the amount of rental that should be charged.

After a careful consideration of the whole matter, I deem it my duty to make the following recommendation:

The commanding officer of the Rock Island Arsenal, in reports on the subject, states—

"The electric power to operate the draw can be furnished by the street railway company from its line now on the bridge, and this company will enter into either a yearly or a perpetual contract, as may be deemed advisable, with the commanding officer of this arsenal to furnish the power in payment as rental for crossing the bridge in accordance with the act of Congress."

The draw of the new bridge has an electric dynamo, and its construction requires electric power for its operation. As the street railway company has in its lines crossing the bridge the necessary power for operating the draw, the expense to that company of allowing the United States to draw from the company's lines enough power to operate the draw occasionally would be very little—I am informed about

\$600 per annum. The cost to the United States of erecting a special plant of such capacity as to furnish the amount of power required occasionally and of maintaining and operating this separate plant, it is estimated, would be six times as much. It will be understood that the cost of adding the small amount to so large a power, which would permit drawing off from the same occasionally, involves little expense; whereas a special plant would have to be large enough to furnish the maximum amount of power occasionally.

It appears therefore to be a very reasonable thing to permit or require the company to furnish this power, which is a small matter in comparison with the value of the franchise the company enjoys.

I therefore recommend that the railway company be relieved from a payment of rental, and that, instead of the enactment of the bill returned herewith as proposed, the bill be so amended or changed as to relieve the company from the payment of rental, but to require the company to furnish the necessary power as described.

I have amended another copy of the bill as described and proposed above, and respectfully recommend its passage as amended.

D. W. FLAGLER,  
*Brigadier-General, Chief of Ordnance.*

WAR DEPARTMENT, *January 20, 1897.*

Respectfully returned to the Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, inviting attention to the report of the Chief of Ordnance contained in the preceding indorsement hereon, and copy of bill showing proposed change.

DANIEL S. LAMONT,  
*Secretary of War.*

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